

Schlesinger to Get Helms' Post at CIA

By Carroll Kilpatrick
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KEY BISCAYNE, Fla., Dec. 21—President Nixon today confirmed reports that he will nominate James R. Schlesinger, chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, to be the next director of the Central Intelligence Agency.

Richard M. Helms, who has been director since 1966 and an official of the agency since 1947, will be nominated ambassador to Iran.

The President worked at his residence here today and conferred with aides, including national security adviser Henry A. Kissinger, by telephone, White House press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler said.

In Washington, it was learned that Mr. Nixon is expected to nominate Under Secretary Joseph N. Irwin, the No. 2 man at the State Department, as ambassador to France.

It was understood that nomination of the 59-year-old Irwin will be made this week. He would replace Arthur K. Watson, former IBM executive who has resigned.

The White House already has announced that Irwin—previously described as slated for “a high-level ambassadorial post”—will be succeeded at State by Kenneth Rush, who now is deputy defense secretary.

Early Friday the President and Kissinger will meet here with Gen. Alexander M. Haig Jr., deputy national security adviser and designated to be vice chief of staff of the Army, who will report on his brief trip this week to South Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and Thailand.

Ziegler refused to comment on reports from Saigon that the President had in effect delivered an ultimatum to both Saigon and Hanoi.

The reports said that the President warned Hanoi it could expect continued and intensified bombing if it refused to accept a negotiated settlement and told Saigon to stop making peace proposals that make it more difficult to reach a settlement.

Significantly, Ziegler did not deny the reports. Rather, he branded them a “rumor” and said he would not comment on rumors.

When a reporter asked if it was the word “ultimatum” that bothered him, he again declined to comment. If the reports had been entirely without foundation he almost certainly would have said so.

Haig left Bangkok today. Kissinger flew here with the President on Wednesday and is scheduled to leave sometime this weekend to spend Christmas with his children.

Reporters have repeatedly asked Ziegler this week why the President has not delivered a report to the nation on the breakdown of the peace negotiations. The report Kissinger gave last Saturday is all the administration has to say about the failure at Paris, Ziegler said.

There have been no public

hints, predictions or speculations from White House officials on what may happen in the future. However, Ziegler has repeated almost daily that the United States is prepared to resume the talks at any time. The United States believes a settlement can be reached if Hanoi adopts a constructive attitude, he has said.

The administration is pursuing “every avenue” to reach an accord, Ziegler said.

In other announcements, Ziegler said that the President had accepted the resignation of David M. Abshire as assistant secretary of state for congressional relations. He resigned to return to Georgetown University as director of its Center for International Studies, Ziegler said.

Ziegler said no decision had been made as to whether acting FBI Director L. Patrick Gray III would be nominated to be director. He also said no decision had been made on a replacement for Schlesinger at the Atomic Energy Commission.

Ziegler vigorously denied published reports that Helms was leaving under pressure and that the White House was dissatisfied with some of Helms' work.

Helms informed the President Nov. 20 that CIA required all senior officials to retire at age 60 and that he believed no exception should be made for him, Ziegler said. Helms will be 60 on March 30.

Mr. Nixon is “totally satisfied” with Helms' work, Ziegler said.

The President requested Helms to stay in the government and offered him the ambassadorship to Iran, Ziegler said. Joseph S. Farland, who has been ambassador to Iran since May, will be reassigned to “another important post,” Ziegler said.

Helms is a native of St. Davids, Pa., and a graduate of Williams College. After a brief time in newspapers, he entered the Navy shortly after Pearl Harbor and served with the wartime predecessor of CIA, the Office of Strategic Services. President Johnson promoted him from CIA's deputy directorship to director in 1966.

Schlesinger, who will be 44 in February, is regarded as one of the more able administrators in the government. He is a native of New York City and was graduated from Harvard in 1950 summa cum laude. He also received his master's and doctorate degrees from Harvard.

He taught for eight years at the University of Virginia and then joined the Rand Corp. as director of strategic studies.

Schlesinger is a Republican and no relation of Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr., who served in the White House during the Kennedy Administration.

HS/TC-228